

SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA

and your conscience. God would have you attend to souls and to spiritual things more than to temporal."¹

Catherine dates this letter from " the new monastery which you have granted me, entitled Santa Maria degli Angeli." This was on the site of the present villa of Belcaro, that most romantically placed castle, embedded in its noble grove of ilexes, froir the battlements of which the Sienese contado lies outstretchec before our eyes away to the Maremma and distant Monte Amiata It had been given her by Nanni di Ser Vanni Savini, who, aftei an unfortunate and turbulent career as a politician of the factior of the Twelve, had been finally converted to a religious life While at Avignon, the Pope had granted her the necessarij faculties ; and on her return to Siena, the Signoria, in answer t(her petition of January 25, 1377, had authorized her to tun the dismantled fortress into a monastery, for the reception o " religious sisters, who will continually pray for the city am citizens and inhabitants of Siena and its contado." ² The Abbo of Sant' Antimo, Fra Giovanni di Gano of Orvieto (a monk ii whom Catherine had great confidence, and who occasionally actei as one of her confessors), formally blessed the beginning of th monastery as papal commissary, in the presence of all Catherine' spiritual family, and William Flete came over from the neighbour ing Lecceto to say the first Mass. Catherine returned to Sien on April 25, the feast of St. Mark.

We have lost sight of Francesco di Vanni Malavolti durin these months. During Catherine's absence at Avignon, he ha drifted back to his former dissolute way of life, and, on her returr at first shrank from visiting her. She implored him to come t

¹ Letter 270 (12). The date, April 16, 1377, is given by the Harleian an Palatine MSS.

² It was forbidden to alienate fortified places without leave of the Commun but the Saint represents in her petition that the castle is in ruins, and that s} will do nothing save with the permission of the Defenders. The petition w approved by the General Council of the Bell by 3 3 3 votes to 65. Cf. the documei given by Grottanelli, notes to *Leggenda minors*, pp. 219-222, and *Legenda*, II. vi 17-20 (§§ 235-238). There was a Carthusian convent m the vicinity, of whic several of the monks were among Catherine's disciples and

correspondents.